



EMPOWERMENT



Empowerment is a term commonly used in supervisor/subordinate relationships today; it is defined as *the ability to build commitment and initiative in others*. Unfortunately, the word "empowerment" is often over-used and mis-applied, which sells the concept short.

A common misconception is that you empower others simply by delegating. It is very important for us to realize that we don't empower others in such a simplistic way, merely by telling someone that they are now empowered to do this or that. In such instances, the supervisor is in fact abdicating his or her own responsibility as a leader. You cannot build commitment by shifting your problems to someone else.

Another misconception is the belief that empowerment comes naturally. Like *leadership*, the ability to empower can never be assumed as a personal quality; rather, it is something that must be worked for and, if we are lucky, others will grant that we have achieved it.

In the book *First Things First*, Stephen Covey outlines six specific conditions that must exist in an organization for empowerment to become a reality, and by examining these conditions, a supervisor stands a better chance of creating a healthy organizational culture.

Condition 1: Trustworthiness

The most important condition for empowerment is personal *trustworthiness*. Trustworthiness represents our **character** (what we are), and our **competence** (what we can do). Persons who possess strong character may be good and honest people, yet they will not be considered trustworthy if they lack the competence to perform their duties in a satisfactory manner. Likewise, persons who may

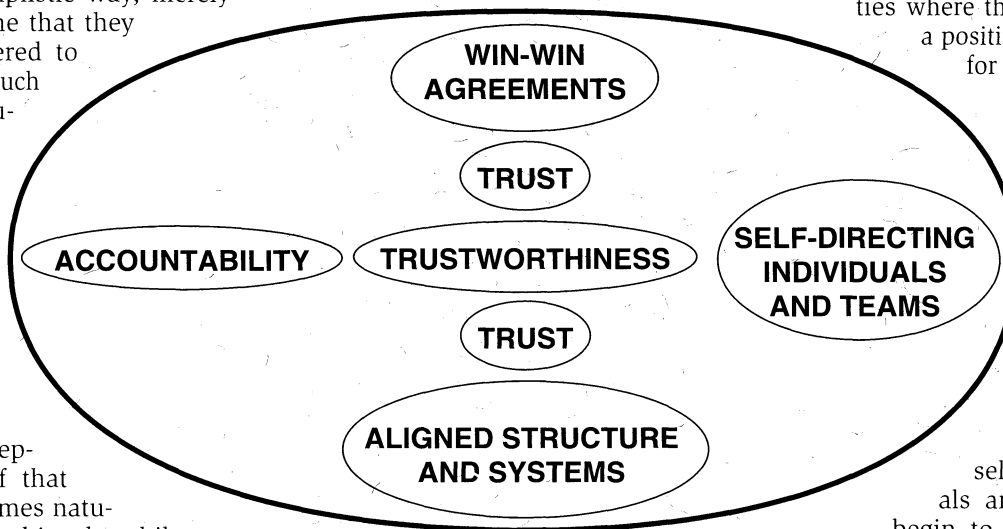
Condition 3: Win-Win Stewardship Agreements

The organization must have a shared vision for the future. Each employee must understand how his or her role "fits" into the vision. A sense of genuine respect and appreciation for each other must abound in the workplace, thus stimulating a desire to seek win-win agreements where employees succeed when the organization succeeds. This will cause employees to anxiously seek opportunities where they can contribute in a positive way which is best for the organization.

Condition 4: Self-Directing Individuals and Teams

If win-win agreements exist in the organization, these agreements will subsequently govern both individual and team performance. These self-directed individuals and teams will then begin to measure their success against these agreements and will choose to hold themselves accountable for their own performance.

(Continued on Page 2)



be extremely competent will not be considered trustworthy if they lack integrity (the ability to walk the talk).

Condition 2: Trust

Out of trustworthiness comes *trust*. If a leader is trustworthy, he or she creates the feeling of trust in others. This is the cement that holds all the other conditions together and creates an environment in which empowerment can flourish.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ★ Presentation Skills
- ★ ABS Skidmarks
- ★ Winter Driving

Empowerment . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

Condition 5: Aligned Structures and Systems

Organizational alignment of structures and systems is absolutely essential for empowerment to be successfully accomplished. All members of an organization must realize how they fit into the larger system and how their efforts serve to complement the realization of the stated mission. If the structures and systems are properly aligned, all employees will enjoy an environment in which empowerment can flourish. Where alignment does not exist, the system will work against itself. Misaligned systems have been found to be the leading reason why empowerment has been held back.

Condition 6: Accountability

The realization of empowerment provides exceptional benefits to the organization through *accountability*. Employees with an "agreement" will choose to accept the responsibility for their own excellence and will refrain from blaming others for their own lack of performance. They will become better connected to their own conscience and less dependent upon criticism or praise from others. Each will possess the humility to actively seek feedback from others as a vital part of the evaluation, planning, and decision-making process.

Conclusion

An empowered environment will allow limitless opportunity for all employees of the organization. For such an environment to exist, each employee must assume greater responsibilities and be sincerely committed to the greater good of the organization. While each person in the organization has an important supportive role to play, those in formal leadership roles must create the vision and align the system. They must also coach and mentor others in order to strengthen the capacity of individuals and teams. In the process, they will further develop relationships of trust. ■



Presentation Skills

"Know Your Audience"

(Part I of IV)

As a presenter, there are numerous things to consider when planning and organizing a presentation. Not the least of which is "Who will I be talking to." Early in the planning stages of a presentation a speaker needs to consider who the audience will be. This is a very important part of planning because it helps determine the needs of an audience and the best way to reach them. Once a speaker understands what the audience hopes to gain from a presentation, more emphasis can be placed in an area to make the material more relevant.

To learn more about your audience examine the following areas:

1. What are their interests in life? Compile a list of interests the audience may have, then think of how you can tie your topic into those interests. What better way to establish rapport with your audience than being interested in their interests.
2. An audience wants to know, how can I use this material to my benefit? Why should I listen? By understanding those needs the speaker can make a link between the audience's needs and the topic.

The audience wants to see "What's in it for me;" so be able to tell them.

3. What kind of attitudes can you anticipate from your audience. What convictions, biases and prejudices do your students bring to the program?
4. What are the physical characteristics of the audience? Will any of the audience have physical limitations that will require special consideration on the part of the speaker?
5. What is the educational or training level of your audience? This knowledge helps establish what level you can speak at or begin your program based on the audience's knowledge of the topic.

Information about your audience can be obtained by:

1. Asking appropriate questions from the person who invited you to speak.
2. Asking friends who are familiar with the group to which you will be speaking.
3. Reading what you can about the group.
4. Arriving early and informally talking to members of the audience.

By knowing your audience you are more likely to achieve a working rapport with them. ■

Winter Driving

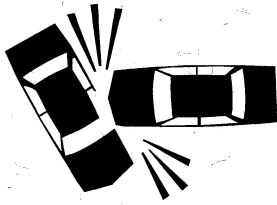
Precision Driving Unit



There is more to winter driving than just getting behind the wheel and starting the engine. One must alter their driving behavior with respect to the existing road and weather conditions. Snow and ice present the most difficult of driving conditions. Keeping this in mind could lessen the chance of an accident.

What kind of driving behavior must we alter?

1. **Speed:** slow down to give yourself ample braking distance.
2. **Following Distance:** minimum four (4) seconds following distance.
3. **Visibility:** aim high in steering by looking down the road to see what might be ahead. Enhance your visibility by turning on your headlights.
4. **Skidding:** ease off the accelerator and brakes. Steer the vehicle in the direction of the skid.
5. **Braking:** don't lock up your brakes. Use firm pressure on the brake pedal to the point just before lock-up. ■



Will An Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) Create Skidmarks?

by Sgt. Doug Roesler

Accident Reconstructionist Unit

This question often arises when an ABS equipped vehicle is involved in a traffic crash. After all, the whole idea behind ABS is to prevent wheel lockup (skidding) so the driver can maintain control of the vehicle. Remember that the definition of a skidmark is a tire friction mark made by a tire that is sliding without rotation on a road or other surface. This sliding, or tire lockup, may be the result of collision damage, mechanical failure (rare occurrence), or, in the case we are considering — braking.

When you slam on the brakes of a vehicle without ABS, the wheels will lockup and the tires will slide. The friction between the road surface and the tires will cause fine particles of tire to deposit on the road surface. Also, friction-generated heat will cause a bituminous road surface (tar or asphalt) to soften, which will often create a very dark, prominent black mark.

When forcefully applying the brakes of a vehicle equipped with ABS, speed sensors located at the wheels sense pending wheel lockup. This information is relayed to a microprocessor which then automatically adjusts the hydraulic pressure to the brakes to prevent lockup. This process occurs up to 15 times per second (independently at each wheel), modulating the hydraulic pressure to the brakes. Thus, wheels continue to turn and there is no lockup, or there is only a split second lockup. This computer controlled "threshold" braking can and often does generate sufficient friction (and heat) to leave noticeable tire marks on the road surface, as described previously.

Tire marks caused by hard braking in an ABS equipped vehicle will generally be lighter in appearance, much like the shadow marks that occur before wheel lockup on a non-ABS

equipped vehicle. In addition, ABS tire marks often create an intermittent light and dark pattern due to the cyclical action of the microprocessor controlling hydraulic pressure at the wheels. As brake pressure increases, the mark becomes darker; as the system senses pending wheel lockup, the system decreases brake pressure and the mark is lighter.

From the above explanation, the answer to the question of whether an anti-lock brake system will leave skidmarks is: "Yes, sort of!" It may be more accurate to describe the tire marks left by an ABS equipped vehicle as *braking friction marks*, rather than true skidmarks. A mere technicality, true! The important thing to understand is an ABS equipped vehicle may leave noticeable tire marks on the road surface under braking conditions and should be looked for at an accident scene. ■

Fatigue and the Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver

by MC Officer Mike Irwin

Motor Carrier Division

A grave error being made by many truck drivers is not obtaining enough sleep. Federal law restricts interstate truck driving time to a maximum of ten hours after eight hours of not being on duty. The problem seems to be getting progressively worse. While a 1986 study found that 30 percent of interstate Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) drivers violate regulations, a more recent study indicates that as many as **91 percent** of interstate drivers violate these regulations today.

Why Worry About Fatigue

- Fatigue has been determined to be the cause of **41 percent** of all large truck crashes.

- Fatigue has been determined to be the cause of **31 percent** of fatal truck accidents.
- These figures are probably understated because crashes caused by impairment due to fatigue are seldom reported to police as the actual cause.

Why Does This Problem Exist

The following items have been identified as factors contributing to the problem of CMV driver fatigue:

- Competitive pressures related to methods of compensation and just-in-time delivery. Incentives may encourage drivers to drive their



trucks while fatigued and to violate hours of service regulations and speed. Drivers who are paid by the mile or paid based on revenue of the load are pressured to exceed safety laws and regulations.

- Inadequate parking facilities were cited as a major problem. When drivers become fatigued, they feel that they do not have a choice but to continue to drive if parking is not available. Drivers face one of two choices of either parking illegally or continue to operate while fatigued.

(Continued on Page 4)

LERC Update Book Review



Juvenile Offenders and Victims

A National Report

The National Center for Juvenile Justice has recently published a research report on "the most requested information" regarding juvenile crime and the juvenile justice system. Police officers will find this information valuable as a way to expand their understanding, and as a reference in preparing for public speaking engagements. Some of the highlights from this report are presented below:

The juvenile population in the United States stood at 69 million in 1995, and is predicted to reach 74 million by the year 2010.

Juveniles are responsible for about 1 in 5 violent crimes.

A small number of juvenile offenders (6%) are chronic or persistent offenders, responsible for more than half of all juvenile offenses.

1 in 3 juvenile detainees were under the influence of drugs at the time of their offense.

The juvenile arrest rate for weapons violations increased 75%, between 1987 and 1992.

Children who are abused, or who are exposed to a violent household, are more likely to become violent (26% eventually have a juvenile arrest record).

This and many other government publications on crime are available through the Law Enforcement Resource Center, located at the Michigan State Police Training Academy. Mary LePiors is the librarian. You may request materials by calling 517/322-1976, faxing 517/322-1130, or E-Mail: lepiorism@mlc.lib.mi.us.

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Driver Fatigue . . .

(Continued from Page 3)

How Do We Detect a Fatigued Driver?

A fatigued driver can be detected if you look for a few noticeable signs:

- the vehicle is moving side to side in its lane of travel,
- speeding, going too slow, then speeding again,
- following too close.

If these or other erratic driving behaviors are noticed, a thorough inspection of a driver's log book should be performed, to detect violations of hours of service. Also, a simple interview with the driver can help to detect a fatigued or ill driver.

What to Do With a Fatigued Driver

A fatigued CMV driver may be placed **out of service**, per legal guidelines.

But as enforcement officers, we do not want to park vehicles along the roadway where they may be a hazard to traffic. If it is safe and convenient to do so, arrange to have the vehicle relocated from the highway.

Know your area:

- nearest available truck parking (truckstops)
- rest areas
- weigh stations (open or closed, the rear lots can be used)

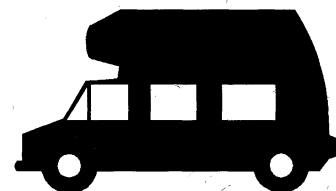
It's Up To You

The studies and surveys that are being performed on truck crashes show that driver fatigue is a growing problem. We as enforcement officers must be aware of the hazard being created by fatigued drivers. We need to go the extra step to detect and remove the fatigued driver from the roadways.

References:

- (i) The Toll Trucks Take. Insurance Review, 47, (3), pp30-37 BMCS Urged to Require Automatic Recording Devices on Large Trucks, Transafety Reporter, 4 (11), p7.
- (ii) Asleep at the Wheel. Traffic Safety, 92 (1), pp 6-9
- (iii) NHTSA, Summary of Medium and Heavy Truck Crashes in 1990. (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Report #HS 807 953) Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office.

Traveler Fatigue Precision Driving Unit



Fatigue is one of the most dangerous problems plaguing America's roadways, according to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. One in five drivers admits to "falling asleep" behind the wheel at least once. At least 50,000 motor vehicle crashes a year are caused by driver fatigue or drowsiness.

The problem is compounded by long work commutes and extended traveling. Holidays are the most likely times for driver fatigue because there are more travelers and more people operating on little sleep. However, there are a number of methods that a driver can use to remain alert:

1. Take breaks by getting out of the vehicle and walking around.
2. Roll down the window for fresh air.
3. Turn up the radio volume.
4. Drink coffee or a caffeinated drink.
5. Keep your eyes moving by glancing around.

The secret is to keep interested in the task at hand (driving), and avoid succumbing to "highway hypnosis." When all fails, and a driver finds it difficult to stay awake—they should get off the road!